

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES - UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VISITING FORCES AGREEMENT:
BALIKATAN EXERCISES

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ABSTRACT

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES - UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VISITING FORCES AGREEMENT: BALIKATAN EXERCISES

RESEARCH AGENDA.

The end of the Cold War placed the United States in an enviable position in global affairs. Like the proverbial phoenix, it emerged from the cutthroat competition for world dominance against its erstwhile Soviet Union nemesis, unscathed and stronger than ever. Ironically, the US faces today a new foe – terrorism. A threat phenomenon that emanates from extremist Islamic fundamentalist groups across nations.

With links to Osama Bin Laden's *Al-Qaeda* network, terrorists, aiming at demolishing the US preponderance and position of invincibility, the group attacked the prominent US Twin Towers of the World Trade Center and Pentagon on 11 September 2001. Further in Southeast Asia, the *Abu Sayyaf Group*, a separatist band of terrorists, is engaged in kidnap-for-ransom activities in the backwaters of the Philippines, with Americans as hostages.

Fanned by religious fanaticism, terrorism has transitioned into a transnational crime. In sowing terror with indiscriminate victims, it seeks to achieve either a political agenda or personal motives through atrocities and crimes against civilians. To end this threat, many countries believe that support from allied states is necessary. The US-Philippines security relation has long been founded on this same premise. It contains security agreements that guarantee support and mutual help, the latest of which being the Visiting Forces Agreement [VFA]. The newly installed security agreement however was not without strong resistance from the host country. Various sectors contend that VFA is an intrusion to Philippine sovereignty and is lopsided in nature.

OBJECTIVES.

To shed light on this dilemma and provide a broader perspective in dealing with VFA, this paper will study why the Philippines opted for the VFA Balikatan Exercises as a framework for internal and external security strategy despite strong public resistance. It hopes to answer three (3) objectives, namely:

- What is the rationale in renewing security ties with the Americans through the VFA after the abrogation of the US Military Bases Agreement in 1991?
- What is the strategic importance of VFA Balikatan in the Philippines vis-à-vis, Balikatan 2002 – 1 series in fighting terrorism?

- What are the implications of the presence of US troops in the Philippines through Balikatan 2002 – 1 series as regards to sovereignty and fighting terrorism?

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK.

The scope of the paper limits its discussion on the aspect of analyzing the inherent factors and conditions of the Philippines why it opted to renew security ties with the US through the VFA. This paper zeroes in on the Balikatan 2002-1 series as the case in point being the first Balikatan exercise held after the 9-11 attacks as an effective tool for improving the military capability of the Philippines in dealing with the problem of terrorism and insurgency. The discussion dealt largely on the security framework applied by the two countries – the US threat-based defense policy in dealing with the problem of 21st century terrorism. The end product presents the reasons on why the Philippines opted for VFA as a common framework of security policy. This paper would neither discuss the management and detailed activities of the Balikatan 2002 – 1 series, nor the constitutional debates of its legality, but rather its strategic implication to both countries in fighting terrorism.

BACKGROUND ON US- PHILIPPINES SECURITY RELATIONS

THE BIPOLAR WORLD AND THE COMMUNIST THREAT.

The long history of RP-US colonial and security relations paved way for the VFA in the Philippines despite strong public resistance. Philippines, having been colonized by the Americans in 1899-1920, had a common ideology shared with the US and therefore having a common threat could also be easily identified. In retrospect, WW II was the crucible of events that set the stage for the bipolar arrangements of states in the Cold War period. It saw the rise of the United States and the Socialist Republics of Soviet Union as superpowers, each with its own ideological mission and allies: the US and the Western Bloc fostering democracy versus the USSR and the Eastern Bloc fostering communism.¹ Within a relatively stable condition of perceived real threat and counter threat, East-West relations, though hostile and at times resulted to armed standoffs, did not escalate to all-out war.

Aware of a Soviet threat either through aggression or the spread of communist ideology, the US developed a policy of containment that, as conceived by George F. Kennan and elevated by the *Truman Doctrine*, meant an active stand against the spread of Soviet hegemony where it had already spread.² For Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, it meant the stopping Russia from extending its territory through force and international cooperation in the 1940s.³

Although the Russian breakthroughs in Cuba, Vietnam, and Indonesia would challenge it, containment came to mean the maintenance of influence through aid and the propagation of the “American Ideology of World Democracy.”⁴ On the military front, foremost of such aids were military materiel, logistical support and expert counterinsurgency advice.

It was in the 1940’s when the first decade of US-Philippine alliance against a common enemy – communism – was forged and made binding by military agreements signed between the two countries. In 1946, the Philippine Congress passed a resolution that allowed President Sergio Osmeña to negotiate with the United States for a military agreement.⁵ The move was driven by the fear of the “red menace” – Russian and Chinese – and the rising tide of local communist insurgency that challenged the viability of the new Philippine Republic on the road to reconstruction. It aimed to protect the country’s territorial integrity, promote mutual defense of the Philippines and the US against all forms of threats and maintain peace in the Pacific.

While this suited US defense interests and ambitions in the Western Pacific, the Philippine government saw it as the logical recourse for the much needed fund necessary for post WW II. It also paved the way for the recovery and the laying down of foundations for a strong Armed Forces. President Elpidio Quirino articulated the promotion of national interest for a free and secure nation.

“By fluke of destiny, we have developed a special relationship with the west, particularly with the United States of America. This relation has created its own problems. We are not indifferent to its advantages. But over and above such advantages, we must maintain the nation’s integrity. We should never again be, in form or in essences, a dependency of any foreign power”.⁶

The “*Military Assistance Act of 1946*,” signed on 12 March 1947, formalized the commitment of the US to assist the development of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.⁷ It also mandated the creation of the Joint United States Military Advisory Group [JUSMAG] to assist in the training of the Armed Forces of the Philippines by the US military on new weapons that the US supplied. Consequently, the US furnished the greater part of the AFP’s materiel against the communist rebels as well as expert advice from the JUSMAG.⁸

In 1947, the US, invoking the pertinent provisions of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act that allowed it to establish military bases as need be, negotiated with President Manuel Roxas for a new military agreement. Thus, on 14 March 1947, President Roxas and US Ambassador Paul V. MacNutt, signed the “*Military Bases Agreement*.⁹ The agreement formalized the use of twenty-three bases and installations on Philippines soil by the US. This made the Philippines

first in the US cordon of defense in the Western Pacific where until the 1990s the major power struggle for supremacy outside the Eurasian landmass was played out.¹⁰

Also in 1947, the Roxas government entered into another agreement with the US. The “*Military Assistance Pact*” was signed on 21 March 1947, which mandated the US to furnish the AFP additional weapons and logistical aid. Specifically, it obligated the US to “assist in the training and development of the armed forces”. Thus:

[T]he government of the United States of America will furnish military assistance to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines in the training and development of the armed forces and in the performance of other services essential to the fulfillment of these obligations... including commitments assumed under the United Nations and to the maintenance of the peace and security of the Philippines.¹¹

The victory of the Chinese Communists in 1949 and the looming Korean War that would pit the US and the United Nations forces against China and the North Korean communists,¹² emboldened the US to take strident moves to secure the region from the expanding reach of communism. Up against the same enemy in 1951, US-Philippine military relations were further strengthened under the President Elpidio Quirino government with the signing of the “*Mutual Defense Pact*” on 30 August 1951. The agreement became the over-all framework for the US-Philippine mutual defense in the event of foreign attacks on metropolitan territories, armed forces, public vessels or aircraft of either country. It was a vital link in the US line of defense in the Western Pacific. To achieve this, the contracting countries agreed to maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist attacks.

Article 4 states that:

“Each party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific on either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its own constitutional processes”.¹³

Hence, by siding with the US through the strength of its historical ties, shared democratic values of freedom, and through US logistics aid did the Philippines succeed in crushing the communist insurgency. By 1953, the AFP had reduced the communists into desultory bands, without the capacity to threaten the state.¹⁴ During this time, the Armed Forces military equipment had also improved tremendously. As noted by Marcelo Nuguid:

The Military is acquiring most of its equipment, to include their upkeep through military aid. This program [Military Assistance Program] was started immediately following the independence of the Philippines... Considering the cost, quantity and quality of supplies, materials, equipment and services acquired through the program, its impact on the development of the military is very significant.¹⁵

In 1991 however, the Philippine Senate rejected the US requests for the extension of the MBA, thereby terminating the US basing arrangements with the Philippines. While this led to the withdrawal of all US military forces and personnel and full Philippine control of all US bases and facilities, the two countries remain defense allies under the 1951 agreement. Despite its withdrawal from the Philippines bases, the US government insisted that it would still remain a Pacific power, hoping to continue projecting its influence in the region. Admittedly, the US withdrawal caused a void in the region's security blanket. On the economic front, it is feared, such role may be assumed by China and Japan. As William Brannigin wrote:

But there is a widespread perception that the departure from Subic Bay reflects a growing U.S. military disengagement that could unsettle confidence in the stability of the economically booming area and lead other countries, notably China and Japan, to take more active roles.¹⁶

In fact, since mid 80's, China's military presence and structures in the strategic islands of Mischief Reefs and Kalayaan Islands Group in the Philippine waters continue to post as an external threat to the sovereignty of the Philippines. Despite several diplomatic negotiations regarding the apparent movements, China refuses to engage on bilateral talks with the Philippines and continues to reject the multilateral settlement of the issue. Thus, in post Cold War Philippines, Major Darwin Z. Guerra opined that communist insurgency remains the most serious threat to peace and progress, China's intrusion and encroachments to the Spratly islands cannot be underestimated. Guerra noted that "it is insurgency, which often takes the form of terrorism."¹⁷ This emanates from the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)/New Peoples Army (NPA)/National Democratic Front (NDF), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) - Misuari Faction, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), and other syndicated crime groups. As such, problems posed by the fractious secessionist Muslim groups and the Abu Sayyaf Group¹⁸ further delay the long protracted economic development of the country. Meanwhile, the US and the Philippines managed to build new grounds for military alliance through the Visiting Forces Agreement.

THE VFA AND THE THREAT-BASED DEFENSE FRAMEWORK (21ST CENTURY).

US- Philippine relations experienced a setback in 1991 when the Philippine Senate rejected the US request for new basing agreement. However, this did not void the other military agreements between the two countries, namely: the Military Assistance Agreement of 1947 [MAA], the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 [MDT], the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement of 1953 [MDAA], and the Serrano-Bohlen Memorandum of Agreement of 1958 [MOA]. These agreements, being separate and independent from the Military Bases Agreement [MBA] have sustained and guaranteed US-Philippine security and defense.

Cognizant of the inadequacy of these agreements and aware of the power vacuum in East Asia due to the pull-out of the US bases from the Philippines, the US government negotiated for a new agreement with the Philippines government – the Visiting Forces Agreement [VFA]. It was signed between Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Domingo L. Siazon, Jr. and US Ambassador Thomas C. Hubbard on 10 February 1998, and entered into force with the concurrent vote of the Philippine Senate.

In brief, the VFA is essentially about the treatment of US armed forces and defense personnel who would be visiting the Philippines to take part in activities covered by the MDT and approved by the Philippine Government. It gives substance to the Mutual Defense Treaty by serving as the legal framework in promoting defense cooperation between the Philippines and the United States. The agreement further provides the mechanisms for regulating the circumstances and conditions under which US forces may visit and stay for a few days or weeks in the country. It is basically an instrument that seeks to make clear rules that will apply whenever members of the U.S. armed forces visit the Philippines for the purpose of joint training, exercises, consultations, exchanges and the likes.¹⁹

THE THREAT OF TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM.

Conceived and intended to give substance to the MDT of 1951, the signing of the VFA have underscored the fundamental importance of US-Philippine military alliance in maintaining peace and security in East Asia and Southeast Asia . The VFA saw its timely existence when threats of terrorism fueled by Islamic fundamentalism became popular with the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the US World Trade Center and Pentagon. In the Philippines, similar threats were experienced from the unabated Muslim secessionist and insurgency problems. Terrorism could be traced back during the colonial years of the country, more than 500 years ago from the Muslims against the Spaniards in the 16th century, then up to the 21st century from local insurgency and terrorist groups. There are terrorists from the communists Cordillera

People's Liberation Army (CPLA), National Democratic Front (NDF) and the New People's Army (NPA); and from the notorious kidnapping and extortion gangs of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

Revealing these forms of domestic and global threat arising from exclusive nationalism and cultural friction,²⁰ these conflicting motives have rendered national security and defense all the more complicated. It has created a very uncertain world, with each state perceiving itself under threat. For, as Barry Buzan, writing on the ambiguity of threats and their sources, noted that:

One can conclude that national security is a highly complicated phenomenon. Each state exists, in a sense, at the hub of a whole universe of threats. These threats define its insecurity by the way they interact with its vulnerabilities, and set the agenda for national security as a policy problem... Since threats can be found everywhere and national security resources are limited, some cut-off point has to be set below which threats are considered inconsequential or worthy for monitoring.²¹

The VFA has thus become a support document on the MDT, threshing out more smoothly a thorny issue on the treatment of US soldiers and military personnel. This has hampered US-Philippine defense relations and negotiations in the past. The agreement has also become a timely defense cooperation perspective between the two countries involving joint training, exercises, consultations, and exchanges that have greater relevance today. It also came at a time when the US, has moved toward greater reconciliation and cooperation; revision of military doctrine and transformation of its forces, and with a view to eliminating war at the global level.²² Yet, at the same time, the world is faced by various elements of conflict. Including intense nationalism and cultural friction.²³

A consideration of current developments in the Philippines would also show that the country is confronted with an immediate and imminent threat that necessitates an immediate solution as well. Alarming **internal threats** in Mindanao from the renewed activity of the different factions of the MILF and the ASG; and the leftist insurgency problem in the northern and central part of the country from the CPP and NPA continued to be a pressing security concern as shown in the following examples:

Monitored plans of the MILF to launch tactical offensives against Army troopers in Lanao provinces, Sultan Kudarat, Cotabato and Sarangani Provinces only manifest their intention to demonstrate their strength to gain more leverage in the peace talks with the government. This desire has been substantiated by

sustained procurement of firearms and logistics to beef up their capabilities. Meanwhile, the tension between the MILF members and the Christians in Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte if not defused could lead to more violent confrontations.

In the absence of an agreed ransom, the ASG will continue to keep their hostages to serve as human shields against pursuing government troops. They will also continue to evade military operations to preserve their manpower and armaments.²⁴

FLASHPOINTS IN EAST ASIA

Of the **external threats**, most apparent and quite alarming are China's encroachments through economic and military structures on the Mischief Reef, the islands claimed by the Philippines,²⁵ and North Korea's build-up of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in the region.

Moreover, although the Post Cold War situation in East Asia is considered to be stable, worst case scenarios regard the Korean peninsula and the South China Sea as flash points in the region. In the South China Sea, the defense issue is, according to Karl W. Eikenberry, a "conflict between China and other claimants to islands and resources."²⁶ Countries that could not oppose China fear Chinese presence in contested areas like in the Spratlys. China has occupied an island in the Paracels [Huang Sa] which Vietnam claims,²⁷ and has established a military outpost on Mischief Reef which the Philippines claims. These actions are considered as "harbingers of a creeping PRC assertiveness in the South China Sea backed by a willingness to use military power."²⁸

A further appraisal of the situation shows that weak states such as Vietnam and the Philippines, to mention two of the other six claimant-countries in the contested island, consider China's aggressive attempts at establishing itself in the Spratlys as an assault to sovereignty and territorial integrity. Faced with this conflict situation, the Philippines only recourse is diplomacy due to its relatively laid back military technology and equipage, hence, incapable of opposing China on the battlefield. The Philippines tries to link its interest on the Spratlys with that of the US. Invoking the larger issue on regional defense against Chinese aggression, the possibility of an attack in the Philippines could be deterred by its renewed security relations with the US.

The US on the other hand would be expected to have no significant initiatives in taking action against China because its interest is, according to a State Department statement, confined to "the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea."²⁹ To which China has posed no

problem, giving the following assurance: "China attaches great importance to safe and free passage in the internal sea lanes there, therefore, there will be no problem..."³⁰ China has also prioritized economic activity with the rest of the world by finally entering the World Trade Organization in 1999.

The present 'entente cordial' between the US and China albeit superficial, and the US' alliances with Southeast Asia countries do not guarantee stable peace and order situation. The US still wishes to maintain a strong presence in the South China Sea. The withdrawal of its military bases from Clark and Subic in the Philippines was a big loss for her strategic advantage over the Asia Pacific region. Since the US has opted for budgetary cuts and has downsized its forces outside the United States, it needed an agreement with the Philippines for its visiting vessels and troops in the region. Hence, the VFA was created in order to contribute to the greater stability of the region .

Confronting such problems on the 'threat-based' defense policy requires an objective and dispassionate consideration of the state's vulnerabilities. Foremost of such vulnerabilities is the state's preparedness to face the threats up front, either by force of arms or through peaceful settlement. Of this Buzan adds:

Since threats can only be assessed in relation to a particular state as a target, security policy has to take into account not only the threats themselves, but also the vulnerabilities of the state as an object of security... Any sound security policy must,... address threats in both these ways: dealing with them as they come, such as reducing vulnerability, preparing defenses against threats; and dealing with these causes, such as seeking peaceful settlement of the dispute.³¹

This infers preparedness at all times and enhanced defense capabilities to deter or confront aggression.

RATIONALES OF THE VFA

Any prudent military policy agenda seeks for the security and defense of the state, country, and people. By signing the VFA, the Philippine government, in cooperation with the US, has created a new instrument to combat terrorism and seeks to gain from it. The rationale therefore on why the Philippines opted for VFA despite public criticisms and resistance could be seen on the following objectives:³²

- To enhance its military preparedness and defense capability;
- To provide the Armed Forces of the Philippines training on the newest techniques and latest technology in defense and warfare;
- To promote the country's security interests, particularly on national defense, territorial integrity and protection of its natural resources;
- To give substance to the Mutual Defense Treaty and improve its deterrent effect against external aggression; and
- To strengthen the Philippines relationship by reinforcing its political, economic, and security linkages with the United States.

Nothing in the salient provisions of the agreement violates the territorial integrity or sovereignty of the Philippines.³³ Neither does it contravene the provisions of the 1987 Philippine Constitution that prescribes the presence of foreign bases, facilities, and installations on Philippine soil.³⁴ Rather, it reflects the government's commitment to fulfill its obligations under the MDT, in the spirit of cooperation, to satisfy mutual security and defense interests in East Asia.

UNDERSTANDING TERRORISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

THE POST COLD WAR SCENARIO

Jeffrey R. Gerlach, on his critique of US security and defense budget requirements in view of the realities in the post WW II era, opined that: during the Cold War era, Washington's only concern with containing Soviet power perhaps justified such expenditures, but the far-flung network of U.S. military commitment is now without an enemy, save the nebulous ones of instability and the unknown.³⁵

What Buzan calls "ambiguous,"³⁶ Gerlach calls the "nebulous" and the "unknown," which were already recognizable in the 1980s, foremost of which is terrorism. Thus, Gerlach offers, "...furthermore, instability is already recognizable in many areas of the globe where ethnic conflict, border disputes, insurgencies, terrorist threats, and other potentially destabilizing forces persist."³⁷ There is no threat to national security and none challenge the state's defense apparatus greater than terrorism today. Yet, since the 1980's, when it first was accorded unprecedented topicality in the academe and in military establishments, terrorism continues to baffle theorists and strategists alike. Thus, according to John M. Gates:

In the 1980s perhaps no problem related to the use of violence concerned the developed world as much as that of terrorism. People who engaged in terrorist acts were viewed in a variety of ways, depending as much on the perspective of the person making the assessment as on the terrorist themselves. Thus, the same individuals could be described as valiant revolutionaries and champions of the weak by some people or insane murderers and criminals by others. As one American scholar observed, “one man’s terror is another’s patriotism.” The kinds of activities in which terrorists have engaged are similarly varied, including bombings, assassinations, hijackings and other forms of hostage taking.³⁸

Since then our understanding of terrorism has increased tremendously.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TERRORISM

Terrorism over the decades has changed in all aspects. In Bruce Hoffman’s considered opinion, the terrorists of today are not the terrorists of yesterday. He identifies five characteristics that distinguish current terrorism, namely:

- Terrorist organizations are amorphous
- Terrorist organizations are flatter organizations
- Their objectives are vague
- They operate more independently
- They claim less frequently any terrorist acts.³⁹

These characteristics are discernible in two terrorist groups, namely, the Al-Qaeda and the Abu Sayyaf Group as the foregoing discussion would show.

AMORPHOSITY

Leadership in terrorist organizations is non-traditional. Legitimacy is neither based on constitutionality or legality but on charisma. There is a perceived absence of a central, controlling figure. This explains the observed amorphosity of leadership in terrorist organizations. According to Hoffman: First, terrorists today are not part of defined organizational entities with visible command control apparatuses. Rather, what we see are more amorphous, less distinctive organizations.⁴⁰

The Al-Qaeda, a terrorists network associated with bin Laden, made headline news after the attack of the Twin Towers. Peter Bergen’s first televised interview with bin Laden confirms

the view that bin Laden's leadership is derived from the members' deference towards him on account of his role in the overthrow of Soviet influence in Afghanistan, his rabid anti-Americanism, and his knowledgeability of the Koran.⁴¹ In like fashion, ASG leader Abdurajak Janjalani derived his ascendancy from having trained and fought with the *mujahedins* in Afghanistan, his memory of Koranic verses, and his anti-Philippine government stance.

FLAT ORGANIZATION

Terrorists groups are organized unconventionally, that is, horizontally. They shun bureaucratic hierarchy and operate through a labyrinthine of networks. Terrorists groups seem to form a league of equals, often acting out roles competitively, which is characteristic of social movements unattached to any state or master. According to Hoffman: These organizations are not organized as hierarchical, pyramidal-shaped structures, identified by their leader or commander-in-chief at the top. They are much flatter organizations, along the lines of networks or organizations that function much more competitively and associated with bin Laden.⁴² They are able to carry out their acts efficiently and effectively. James W. Smith and William C. Thomas attribute this to their ability to harness advances in communication technology much to their advantage. Thus: "Modern terrorism has a distinctive structure that makes more use of networks than of independent cells. Advances in communications have facilitated the employment of networks to enhance efficiency and security."⁴³

AMBIGUITY OF GOALS

Hoffman admits to the ambiguity and indeterminacy of the objectives of terrorists in the following words: "Also, we knew what they wanted... We knew what motivated them, what their aims were, how they dovetailed their actions to suit their agenda, and we had a sense of what they wanted and who they were."⁴⁴

On the ambiguity of the objectives of terrorists, Smith and Thomas wrote: "the consequences of the violence are themselves merely a first step and form a stepping stone toward objectives that are more remote."⁴⁵ For Bergen, Al-Qaeda's vague political goal could be simply put as the deliverance of the Muslim world from American imperialism, and the revival of the seventh century caliphate based on the teachings of Muhammad on the *umma* [universal Muslim brotherhood]. For the ASG, the goal has mutated from the establishment of an independent Islamic State in Southern Philippines to a kidnap for ransom gang.

INDEPENDENCE

Muslim terrorists are more united by ideology than by well-articulated goals. With the US as the archenemy, they operate independently in a rush to inflict the worst damage and gain the approval of peers. Their purported cohesion obtains from unity forged by a common view of the singularity of the enemy – the US. As Hoffman sees it: “Also, what we see today are groups that have changed. As the stove-piped control apparatus or structures have eroded, groups feel that in their independence they are more able to carry out ambitious types of operation.”⁴⁶

Almost a decade since the initial bombing of the World Trade center in 1993 and almost sixteen months since the harrowing attack on the Twin Towers, the nexus between the actors and the events remain tenuous. Abu-Nidal, Baader, and Meinhof are linked with the first event, while bin Laden and the Al-Qaeda are linked with the second. Kidnap-for-ransom activities in Western Mindanao, however, are loosely associated with the ASG, including those with the slightest connection with the ASG, often by virtue of kinship or dubious claims of membership with the ASG.

ANONYMITY

Anonymity benefits the terrorists more, because, being unknown, keeps the enemy on a guessing game. Faceless and unmanifested, the terrorists are less prone to crackdowns, arrests, and accountability. For the terrorists are less concerned with credit than the satisfaction of having achieved their goal. By not claiming acts of terrorism, the blame is diffused and the act is committed with impunity. Of this, Hoffman notes: “terrorism is less of a means to an end than an end in itself, serving God or the cathartic self-satisfaction of a striking blow against the hated enemy. Violence is less tailored and as violence has become more indiscriminate, the terrorists themselves have become more reluctant to claim credit for events.”⁴⁷

THE 9-11 TERRORIST ATTACKS AND THE ASG KIDNAPPINGS

The attribution of a terrorist act to an individual, a group or an organization is more accomplished by intelligence work and by the media than by any slight or outright claim by the perpetrators. The Al-Qaeda has never claimed the Twin Towers attack. However, the ASG proclaims their act to newsmen for added media mileage to rearticulate social grievances and a political agenda emasculated by brigandage and barbarity. With foreign nationals as hostages, they inevitably become top stories and their atrocities as choice media fodder. As Tyler Marshall and John Hendren of the Los Angeles Time noted: “Abu Sayyaf, which espouses Islamic fundamentalist ideology but lives mainly on lucrative kidnap-for ransom business, beheaded American hostage Guillermo Sobero last July.”⁴⁸

Although the US emerged the victor at the end of the Cold War, it faces a new enemy – terrorism. The cold war was as much a victory of free market economy and the American liberal values, of freedom and democracy. Their overreaching influence, however, meets violent resistance and frustration from the Muslim world. According to Smith and Thomas, “as the U.S. becomes better at protecting its forces on the battlefield, adversaries are more likely to focus more on asymmetrical methods, such as terrorism.”⁴⁹ The US has thus become more vulnerable to terrorist attacks, both in and outside the homeland. With the symbols of US dominance as targets, the September 11 attack has shown to the world the vulnerability of the US to asymmetrical warfare, sparing none, including the civilians.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS TO US AND PHILIPPINE SECURITY

Terrorism has come of age this century. What was once confined within the bounds of a country have become transnational in scope. One American sphere no longer invincible to terrorism is Southeast Asia, particularly the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia. It is here where territorial security systems are weakest and where terrorists like the ASG perpetrate banditry by taking Americans and other foreign nationals for captives first from the Malaysian resort of Sipadan and next from Dos Palmas.⁵⁰

The very forces that have ushered in a world sans borders, made smaller and closer by information technology, have been harnessed by terrorists for their own purposes.⁵¹ Without the benefit of a stationary base, they operate from any country, and are expert in mobile communication gadgetry, and use maximum media mileage for propaganda purposes. Since they can strike from any area in the world, nothing raises as much speculation and dread. Lacking a cohesive organization or a monolithic ideology, they rouse aggression against a target enemy through extreme emotionalism and self-centered nationalism.

As East Asia has become a dangerous zone, where Al-Qaeda jihadists are active after the assault on Afghanistan,⁵² the US needs to protect its strategic interests in the region and secure the investments and the lives of its citizens by seeking alliance with the Philippines. Although it has alliances with other Southeast Asian countries like Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia, the Philippines remains the US most reliable and willing ally in its grand design of securing a berth for Pacific power.⁵³

Barred from basing rights in the Philippines, the US maneuvered for the approval of the VFA that allowed it to reposition itself in the region. To critics, the agreement was tantamount to interference in the domestic affairs of the country, such as the military operations against the ASG. The VFA violates the 1987 Philippine Constitution that, according to former Senator Jovito

R. Salonga, "explicitly prohibits the presence of military bases, facilities, crafts, and forces on Philippines soil".⁵⁴

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE THREAT-BASED DEFENSE POLICY IN THE US-RP ALLIANCE

A classic in the study of international peace, especially as applied on national security and defense, is the Threat Based Concept. Although associated with the Cold War in relation to the broader strategy of containment, it is still relevant today.

THE ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS

As stated by Collins, the notion of threat is based on intelligence and the analysis includes knowledge of the enemy's capacities.⁵⁵ Planning with the Threat Based Concept involves four steps, namely:

- Specification of Purpose
- Appreciation of the Enemy
- Formulation of Strategy
- Allocation of Resources

The concept can be applied on the US-Philippine defense alliance, with the VFA-Balikatan as a unit of analysis.

The foregoing analysis includes only the three steps, with steps three and four taken together.

PURPOSE

International [external] and national [domestic] conditions [pressures] influence the purpose or interest, which in turn affects policy. As Buzan put it: The result is that national and the international system is as much a product of internal factors, many of them extraneous, as it is the external ones that provide principal justification.⁵⁶

Terrorism fomented by Muslim extremists associated with or under the influence of bin Laden is considered the global menace.⁵⁷ While terrorism is committed by the local communists, the ASG is a destabilizing factor in peace and development. The combination of external and domestic terrorism is an urgent defense and security concern for the US and the Philippines. In fact, the US lists the ASG as one of twenty-seven terrorist organizations in the world. Besides Bin Laden himself and his secretive Al Qaeda organization, the list includes the Abu Sayyaf

Group, known for beheading plantation workers and blowing up Christian churches in its effort to set up an Islamic State in the Southern Philippines.⁵⁸

APPRECIATION OF THE ENEMY

This involves the appreciation of the threats posed by the enemy and its capabilities and intentions, evaluated in terms of the degree they pose to national interest. The terrorist attack of the Twin Towers showed the capacity of the terrorist to wreck havoc on the US, a country with the best security and defense establishment in the world. The perpetrators were traced to the Al-Qaeda network of bin Laden. They enjoy enormous funds from the multimillionaires and other rich anti-American Muslim ideologues.⁵⁹

Their human resources are middle class young professionals skilled in the use of information technology, encryption, sabotage, and murder. A formidable religious army of stateless terrorists willing to be martyred in their *jihad* against the US. They are armed with high-powered armaments, tracking devices, and have the potential to use biological and chemical warfare. They are capable of committing far worse crimes against humanity than the attack of the Twin Towers. They trained their cadres in asymmetrical guerrilla warfare in the mountains of Afghanistan, while that country was under the regime of the Taliban.⁶⁰ Their financial, weapons and human resources are harnessed in a war against US presence in the Muslim world. The US citizens are the primary targets for murder, hostage taking, and ransom. Worse, because of the indiscriminate nature of their activities, they pose a serious harm to humanity.⁶¹

Their network spans through more than sixty countries, with the Philippines as their farthest reach in East Asia.⁶² Reportedly, the ASG have linkages with the Al-Qaeda and with terrorist groups in nearby Malaysia and Indonesia. With the Philippines South Seas for escape, they seek refuge among the Muslims of Sabah, where they acquired their weaponry, watercrafts, communication gadgets, and munitions supplies. Initially, their purpose was the establishment of an independent Islamic State in Southern Philippines which involved attacks on soldiers and military installations. Of late, they have deteriorated into a band of bandits, motivated by crass economic motives, as their kidnap-for-ransom activities show.⁶³

ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES AND FORMULATION OF STRATEGY

This involves holistic planning that includes the diplomatic, economic, military, informational and other instruments of national power to achieve national objectives. It may involve diplomacy, use of force, threat or their combinations.⁶⁴ Declaring a war against terrorism, the US is poised to bring the war where the terrorists were found. With the Philippines as its second forward line of defense in East Asia, it aims to project its power by invoking its

military alliances with the Philippines, principally through the MDT and the VFA. In cooperation with the Philippines, the US, upon request, agreed to the *Balikatan*, which, in effect, became the two countries' tactical move against terrorism in the Philippines.

THE ASG TERRORISM IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

Terrorists on the wanted list of the US are known to seek refuge in the Philippines. They live amongst the local terrorist and friendly Muslims, particularly in Southern Mindanao, and on the communities under the control and influence of the ASG. By providing protection to Muslim terrorists wanted for heinous crimes abroad, the Southern Philippines has become part of the geographic reach of international terrorism. As reported by Tyler Marshall and John Hendren in the *Los Angeles Times* on 29 May 2002, "Indonesian national Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi, a prominent member of the Southeast Asian militant group Jemaah Islamiah, which has been tied to al-Qaeda, was arrested in Manila. Other militants had taken shelter among the country's minority Muslim population, mainly in the South."⁶⁵

The US, in its effort to stamp out terrorism, has waged a war against terrorism that places Southern Philippines within the orbit of US anti-terrorism in Southeast Asia. Since 1991, the ASG continues to attack the AFP and engage in kidnap-for-ransom activities.⁶⁶ Foremost of these activities were the Sipadan incident in Malaysia and the Dos Palmas incident in Palawan where Filipinos, Americans, and other foreigners were taken as hostages. The presence of American hostages Martin and Gracia Burnham made the United States become more determined to rescue them in cooperation with the Philippines government.⁶⁷.

The government had tried several means to end the activities of the ASG. This included a series of negotiations and giving in to their demands for developmental and livelihood projects. Owing to the importance of the American hostages to their interests, the ASG refused to release the Burnhams and the other hostages after eighteen months. Rescue operations by the AFP were ineffective against the ASG. This left the Philippines with one last recourse, the application of the VFA-*Balikatan*. The American Special Operation Forces(SOF) provided the training of the AFP for rescue operations, including the use of state of the art night surveillance technology, with the rescue of the Burnhams as the objective.

On the connection between the *Balikatan* and the rescue, Marshall and Hendren wrote:" Obviously, we're impatient to see the Burnham released... but the fact is we have methodical program and time management to help improve the capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. U.S. Ambassador Francis Ricciardone said in an interview that the exercise seems to be on time and proceeding well. It's a travesty that they 9th U.S. Special Forces could come

and go with Martin and Gracia still in captivity said Robert Mycell, a Manila-based spokesman for the Burnhams' employer, the New York Tribes Mission of USA. This will be very difficult for people to understand".⁶⁸

THE BALIKATAN EXERCISES BEFORE 9-11

There had been nine such exercises since 1991, briefly.⁶⁹

1. *Carat* – a specific amphibious exercise between the US Pacific Fleet and the Philippine Navy;
2. *Masurvex* – marine patrol, surface detection, tracking, reporting and training;
3. *Palah* – exercise between the US Navy Seals and the Philippine Navy Special Warfare Group to improve individual and team skills on special naval warfare;
4. *Teak Piston* – airforce to airforce exercise covering aircraft maintenance, sea search, rescue, and special tactics training;
5. *Balance Piston* – infantry exercise on special operations;
6. *Handa Series* – bilateral table war game to enhance higher level command and staff interaction between the AFP and the US Armed Forces;
7. *Flash Piston* – navy exercise similar to *Palah* involving training in underwater demolition, weapons familiarization, sniper training, direct actions and field exercise to cap training;
8. *EODX* – special interoperability training between the demolition and ordnance experts; and
9. *Salvex* – navy exercise to improve skills on salvage operations.

THE VFA-BALIKATAN EXERCISES

BACKGROUND

The VFA, through the RP-US Mutual Defense Board (MDB) had short-listed 6 Most Likely Operations (MLO) fields as guidelines of its activities. These are: [1] counter-insurgency, [2] humanitarian assistance disaster relief [3] non-combatant evacuation operation [4] search and rescue/recovery operations [5] anti-terrorism / counter-terrorism and [6] peacekeeping operation. Along these lines, several activities were crafted between the two panels of the RP-US Balikatan Team. These are:⁷⁰

TITLE	SCHEDULE	LOCATION		PARTICIPANTS (Forces)	REMARKS
Balikatan 2002-1	31 Jan-31 Jul 02	Basilan, Zamboanga	AFP	RP - 3,800 US - 1,200	Completed
Balance Piston 02-02	18 Jan-15 Feb 02	Fort Magsaysay Camp Tecson Clark Airbase	PA	RP - 267 US - 333	Completed
Teak Piston 03-4	1 st Qtr, CY 02	TBD	PAF	RP - 155 USAF - 150	Cancelled
Balance Piston 02-4	22 Jul-24 Aug 02	Fort Magsaysay Camp Tecson Clark field	PA	RP-66 US-27	Completed
Balikatan 02 Masurvex	22 Apr-06 May 02	Fort Magsaysay Ternate Subic Bay	AFP	RP-2,852 US-2,626	Completed
CARAT 02	12-27 July 02	Olongapo City Ternate, Cavite	PN	AFP - 1,175 USN/M-1,440	Completed
Flash Piston 03-3	25 Oct-10 Nov 02	TBD	PN	AFP -458 US-755	Completed
Balance Piston 03-2	14 Oct-15Nov 02				Cancelled
Talon Vision 02 Multi-service	14-26 Oct 02	Fort Magsaysay Clarkfield Crow Valley	PAF	APP-458 US-755	Completed
Flash Piston	25Oct – 10 Nov02	Fort Magsaysay Clark Air base	PN	PN-25 USN-21	Completed
Balance Piston 03-2	14 Oct – 15 Nov 02	Fort Magsaysay Camp Tecson	PA	PA-72 US-20	Completed
Thai MTWS EX (RP Observer)	17-20 Sep 02	Pattaya, Thailand	PN(M)	PN(M)-4	Completed
Marseaex 02 Multilateral Observer	28Apr-03May02	Thailand	PN	APP-6	Completed
Concept Development (Team Challenge)	9-13 Sep 02	Honolulu, Hawaii	OJ8	APP-15	Completed
Cobra Gold 02 (Observer)	19-25 May 02	Pattaya, Thailand	OJ8	APP-7	Completed

TABLE 1. RP-US MDT RELATED EXERCISE CY 2002

Source:: *RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) Related Exercise CY 2002 Update Report*, an official document of The Assistant Chief of Staff for Education & Training, J8, Headquarters, Armed Forces of the Philippines, General Headquarters, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

ASSESSMENT OF THE AFP COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

During the conduct of the RP-US Balikatan administration, initial assessments by the Americans reveal that Philippines military equipment was already laid back. For instance, the

communication system, which plays an important role in the performance of the whole Armed Forces of the Philippines's (AFP) mission and function. As could be seen:

STRENGTHS:	
System	Feedback
AFP Long Lines Communication System	Outstanding maintenance of equipment
AFP Telephone Switching Network	Outstanding maintenance of equipment
AFP Tactical/Mobile Communication System	Outstanding maintenance of equipment
Satellite Communication System	Good Back-up to fixed communication system
Personnel / Technicians	Highly Skilled
WEAKNESSES:	
AFP Tactical Communication System	Inadequate number and outdated; limited interoperability and no encryption capability
AFP Fixed Communication System	Limited operation at Northern Luzon, Bicol-Visayas and Mindanao links; outdated communication equipment and no encryption security capability
AFP Telephone Switching Network	Outdated telephone switching system; limited tactical and interoperability communication equipment and no encryption capability
Satellite Communication System	Limited interoperability and commercial satellite service, fixed/immobile communication system and no encryption capability

TABLE 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE AFP COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Source:: RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) BK-02-1 Series Accomplishment Report CY 2002, an official document of The Assistant Chief of Staff for Education & Training, J8, Headquarters, Armed Forces of the Philippines, General Headquarters, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Given this kind of deficiency in equipments, particularly on communication, Balikatan exercises became one very viable option for the country to acquire modern military equipments to include training and technology transfer. Hence, there was a lot of enthusiasm for BK 2002-1 on the part of the government and military organization. As Col Gomez said on an interview, "VFA would usher in a new era of modern military capabilities for the Filipino soldiers in terms of training, vis-a-vis, new technology; intelligence and information system; and actual exercise on modern military equipment in combat operations. It also brings us to a competitive

advantage in developing the fighting capability of the AFP as a whole in terms of equipment acquisition and training, technology and financial assistance coming from the US."

THE BALIKATAN EXERCISE 2002 – 1 SERIES.

Since 1992, BK 2002-1 Series is the 16th military exercise conducted in the country. This series became the most controversial among the past exchange military trainings because of the aftermath of the 9-11 terrorists attacks in New York and Pentagon. The culprits of the attacks, known as the Al Qaeda and its networks were said to have links with the local terrorists in the Philippines, hence, BK-2002-1 was also specifically designed to counter terrorism. It, being a mutual defense strategy for the US and the RP, the joint exercise had three (3) phases: first, the integration of the RP-US exercise participants and determination of training requirements; second, the operational capability training of the SOUTHCOM(Mindanao) units against terrorism and the beginning of the socio-economic programs; and third, the redeployment of the RP-US participants to their operational areas and home stations. The objectives of these activities are: To improve the operational readiness of the armed forces of both countries in combating terrorism and to enhance the interoperability between RP and US soldiers through the exchange of training and techniques.

Planned and coordinated by both the US Armed Forces and AFP Lead Planners, the scope of the exercise include:⁷¹

- Combined land force/special operations forces cross training and field training event. (CLF/SOFOR CTX/FTX)
- Combined air forces cross training and field training event (CAFFOR CTX/FTX).
- Combined naval special operations forces cross training and field training event (CNAVSOF CTX/FTX).
- Combined civil military operations event (CCMO)
- Combined intelligence cross training (CICTX)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

On training, Balikatan has completed 166 training courses and sessions with 178 officers and 3,257 EP participants. About 159 training sessions were initiated by the unit commanders and their respective US ARSOF advisers. Most of these trainings were on rifle marksmanship, land navigation, and life saving techniques. These were conducted to improve the individual skills of the soldiers and enhance their capability to shoot, move and survive in combat environment. The battalions have significantly enhanced their over-all operational effectiveness

especially in tracking and engaging the remnants of the Abu Sayyaf Group in Basilan. This improvement is shown in the number of successful combat operations that have been conducted in the six months since the exercise started.⁷²

On Civil Military operations, about US\$ 334,000 worth of medical supplies and materials was distributed in Basilan and Zamboanga with the help and support of International Organizations (IO), Non-Government Organizations (NGO), and Private Volunteers Organizations (PVO). Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP) in Basilan and Zamboanga City was conducted in thirty-three (33) barangays and treated at least 10,469 people. Likewise, the Combined Information Bureau had successfully handled and managed various media activities in support of the exercise.

On Civil Engineering Projects. About US \$4 million worth of construction material and supply contracts were allocated to support the civil engineering projects in Basilan Island. These projects were done jointly by the US Naval Construction Task Group (NCTG), elements of 545th Engineer Bn and the 4th PN Seabees Bn, AFP.

THE VFA BALIKATAN CONTROVERSY: REACTIONS AND DILEMMA

The early years of *Balikatan* exercises did not gain as much attention and reaction from the media, politicians, and civil society despite its implications to national sovereignty and violation of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which, prescribes the presence of foreign vessels and troops in the country. Other developments however brought *Balikatan* to a controversy with the aftermath of the 9-11 attacks in the US and its connection with the rescue of the Burnhams from the ASG.⁷³ The intensity of controversy and public criticisms on *Balikatan* exercises escalated further, when, beginning September 2002, the exchange military exercises shifted in orientation – from joint training exercises to counterinsurgency. Of this, Roland G. Simbulan wrote:

A shift in the orientation of and implementation of the *Balikatan* exercises, however, has occurred after September 11, 2002. *Balikatan* in early 2002 was intentionally conducted in Basilan and Zamboanga war zones, this time with live targets in actual military operations, during what National Security Adviser Roilo Golez calls ‘on-the-job training.’

Negative public sentiments and apprehensions to the objectives of the Americans in Balikatan exercises mounted further when, in 11 February 2003, unidentified Pentagon officials were quoted as saying: “more than 1,000 US troops, including 350 special operations

soldiers, would be deployed for combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu. No date has been set yet⁷⁴.

Of this, Philippine Foreign Secretary Blas Ople criticized Washington's unnamed junior officials for giving erroneous statement. Immediately, Malacanang officials, through Presidential Spokesman Ignacio Bunye denied the issue by pronouncing that the Terms of Reference (TOR) is still "being threshed out. He added: "the war games will be conducted under the same framework used in a similar six-month joint exercise last year in Basilan"⁷⁵.

Many others also expressed fear that "military exercise should be scrapped to prevent US soldiers from coming under fire or being drawn into a war in Mindanao."⁷⁶ An intelligence report by the military has said that the ASG was planning to carry out a fresh round of offensives against the US troops in the area of the exercise to avenge the death of their leader Mujib Susukan, and to avenge the annihilation of their Muslim ancestors from the Americans under American General John Pershing a century ago.⁷⁷

To acknowledge some lessons from history, Muslim sensitivities towards the Americans could be seen since the American occupation of the islands from 1899 to 1920. During the early occupation, America's basic policy in the Philippines was laid down by President William McKinley who declared that the islands were "not ours to exploit but to develop, to civilize, to educate, to train in the science of self government"⁷⁸. As such, the policy was also applied corollary and specifically for the Moros and other non-Christians for their incorporations into Philippine national life.⁷⁹ The policy worked well in the country, but down in Mindanao, for the Moros, "...Filipinos, not willing and ready to accept American rule, nor acknowledge Spanish rule, was not even more willing to acknowledge a transfer of sovereignty to another foreign nation – the America".⁸⁰

Thus, the anti-American attitude of the Moros of today regarding the presence of the Americans in the VFA was inherited from the old Moros in the past under the American occupation from 1899-1920 . To quote Gowing:

"The Moros became alarmed at the increasing numbers of Americans coming into their homeland and behaving as though they owned it."⁸¹

Sporadic resistance broke out, as a response. On a few occasions, the clashes were major battles which took hundreds of Moro lives. The fighting was fiercest around Lake Lanao and on the island of Jolo. The two most notable battles were Bud Dajo in 1906 and Bud

Bagsak in 1913. Both occurred in Jolo. In the book, it was noted that the Americans did not hesitate to counter Moro armed opposition with terrible slaughter. Bud Dajo history reveals that:

"Under the command of Col Joseph W. Duncan, the American forces, consisting of infantry and dismounted cavalry, an artillery battery, a detachment of constabulary and six sailors from a gunboat anchored offshore, moved slowly up the thickly wooded and steep slope of the mountain. They dodged bullets, spears, boulders and the slashes of kries and barongs. Artillery pieces were hauled to the crater's edge with the aid of block and tackle. The combat was fierce. Moro women, dressed in men's clothes, fought side by side with their husbands. The slaughter was terrible. On the morning of March 8, when the battle ended, more than 600 Moros were dead. The American forces counted 94 casualties (21 killed, 73 wounded).⁸²

As details of the battle reached the United States, General Wood was severely criticized for the carnage, particularly of women and children. The Washington Post pictured Wood as a blood-thirsty monster difficult to parallel in history. The New York World published a cartoon showing him standing over his victims with a dripping sword."

The Americans bad image among the Moros was still evident today that a Moro lullaby song contains the cry and aspiration of the Moros to avenge their ancestors massacre. The song goes: "go ahead baby, sleep so that when you wake up, you would be strong enough to avenge our ancestors against our enemies who are unbelievers of Allah..⁸³ Some American newspapers during the American occupation even tagged Governor Leonard Wood, who masterminded the American policy in Mindanao as 'blood-thirsty monster' and Bud Dajo a 'slaughter'.⁸⁴

Despite the annihilations and massacres, Moros resistance from foreign invasion and quest for Muslim independence were never abandoned. The Americans were just stunned from this trait attributing it to the Moros ideals of zealotry. An interview from scholars of the Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS) at the University of the Philippines (UP) conducted by Liwanag M. Lo last 07 March 2003, revealed the following. Majority of Muslims consider the VFA as one way to help improve the AFP military capability and infrastructures in Southern Mindanao. Bringing the exercises in the war-torn areas would cause negative repercussions to peace and order situation in the country. More serious incidents would be expected given the strong historical resentment of Islam fundamentalist groups if the US and the Philippines governments would not be careful to consider historical and religious-cultural sensitivities of the Muslims.

Singh Abubakar, 22 years old, a native of Zamboanga City from Tausug tribe and a graduate student from the UP IIS, when asked if he is in favor or not to the VFA, contend that, "I have no way to object the government's decision in opting for VFA by reason of conformity with regards to the mandate of the Philippine government. The VFA would be able to provide some help to our country like training, exchange of technology, better equipment and additional infrastructures for Mindanao. The government however should be able to think more clearly for the interest of the country by bargaining better for more monetary considerations which is the major thing that our country really needs."⁸⁵ He emphasized also that the Philippines government should be cautious in dealing with the Balikatan activities as it has the tendency to aggravate internal conflict not only between the government forces and the Moro rebels and ASG, but also with the foreign troops. The presence of the US troops will again revive the long thawed animosity on the grounds of strong historical experience and religious sentiments. He averred,

"sa mga urban areas, gusto nila and mga Kano dahil sa mga pagpapagawa ng mga pier, tulay o daan. Makakadagdag sila sa development. Pero sa mga rural areas, yun ibang Moros ay talagang wini-welcome yung mga Amerikano para mai-paghiganti nila yung mga ninuno nila. Hindi dahil pabor sila sa mga Kano na pumasok sa Pilipinas, kundi para tirahin at patayin sila". (the Moros from urban areas welcome the Americans for the infrastructure developments that they will bring to the country. But Moros from the rural areas have different agenda: To avenge the massacres of their ancestors in the past at the hands of the Americans . To hit them and kill them, not to welcome them to stay.)"

These, he feared that revenge and casualties will make the situation worse since the American government will not allow its soldiers be harmed by the locals. He also lamented that,

"yung media ay laging gine-generalize ang mga Muslim sa paggamit ng salitang "Muslim", samantalang ang tinutukoy naman ay mga rebelde. Ang mga Muslim ay tinatawag na Muslim dahil kami ay sumusunod sa relihiyong Islam. Pero kami ay may iba-ibang tribu: Kaya akala ng mga tao, lahat ng Muslim ay masasama katulad ng mga Abu Sayyaf at MILF bandits and terrorists" (the media always generalize the word Muslim to mean all the Muslim people while referring to the Moro rebel groups as ASG bandits. We are called Muslims because we are followers of Islam religion. But we have different tribes. So people think all Muslims are bad and all Muslims are Abu Sayyaf).

Zaldy Asamudinn, 30 years old, a native from Jolo, Sulu, and a graduate student of UP IIS, when asked if he is in favor or not with the VFA, answered that, ‘Yes, for compliance, I cannot oppose the VFA because the government has already decided for it. It’s already here for us just to accept, and we cannot do anything about it, or to stop it. I do not agree however with it as the good thing to do because, having the US troops in our country to help us solve our internal problems only reveals our own government forces weakness and incompetence.⁸⁶ He said,

“... para bang nakakahiya. Para bang sinasabi natin na hindi natin kaya. .. linapakita natin na kulang tayo sa kakayahang. Tao lang yang kalaban natin, hindi naman malalaking bansa yan... (It is just so shameful to admit, by allowing the Americans in our country, that we cannot solve our own problem. We are only fighting our internal rebel forces, not superpower countries..”)

Mindanao, as he specifically stressed, is very strategic not only in geographical location, but also in resources and natural endowments. Americans, according to him, is not only after the terrorism problem, but also to Philippines natural resources. It is for this reason that the Philippines should have been wiser in bargaining for the best compensation.

“Strategic talaga ang Mindanao. Ang unang trade ay ginagawa sa Mindanao galing sa mga bansang Tsina. Dinadaanan talaga yang Sulu Sea papuntang Jolo.” “...Kaya kung maaari sana ay gumawa ang gubyerno ng paraan na lubus-lubusin ang pagkuenta ng pera [katumbas ng tamang halaga ng paggamit ng Mindanao].” “Yung makakatulong talaga sa lahat ng tao sa bansa, hindi lamang sa iilan tao.” (Mindanao is really strategic. The early first trade was done in Mindanao coming from foreign countries like China. They pass through Sulu Sea going to Jolo. That’s why the government should bargain better for more. The amount that will really help all the people in the country, not just the few ones.)

On the part of Muslim sensitivities to the issue of conflict with the presence of the US troops, Azamuddin responded that the sentiments of the Moros until now are very strong. “Muslims have been fighting since the past, how much more now? Muslims fight, because we Muslims believe we fight for peace and freedom from domination.” Given this stand, he expounded that a recall of the past grudge against the Americans in annihilating their ancestors would be detrimental and would bring destruction to the beautiful island of Mindanao. The land will become a war zone between the foreign soldiers and the Moros. Whatever the case is, he

assured that it is still the Filipinos who will be the looser because the casualties will be more on the Filipinos whether Christians or Muslims, and the whole nation.

"Ayaw naming [mga Muslim] na mangyari ang mga nangyari noon. Sa totoo lang, ang Muslim, ayaw naming sumama sa Philippine government. Kung tutusin, sabi naming, mas gusto pa naming na Amerikano ang mag-administer sa amin, kaysa yung mga Pilipino na alam naman naming mga Muslim na nakuha na ng mga Kastila, di ba? So, kasi nakita na naman din naming kung paano mag administer ang mga Kano. Pero, dahil sa nangyari na minamassacre nila ang mga Moro, -- mga motibo na hindi maganda, meron silang mga 'hidden agenda' na hindi natin alam, siguro kung lumala yun, ubos na ang mga Moro. ...Ngayon, kung mangyayari iyong, [mauljubos na ang mga Moro kasi marami na silang malalaking armas ngayon. Hindi lang mga pistol." ... Kaya kung uulitin ang nangyari noon, parang wala na...talagang makakasama talaga sa mga taga Mindanao..." (Even in the past, in truth, we'd rather have the Americans administer us than the Philippine government who were already taken by the Spaniards. We already know how the Americans did it. But with the slaughter that they did to our ancestors – as part of the hidden agenda that we did not know of, [its dangerous]... The Moros would have been all wiped out before. Now, if this will happen again, the Moros will surely be wiped out because they have more arms and are bigger now. Not only pistols. That is why, if there would be a repeat of what happened in the past, for sure, it's going to be for the detriment of Mindanao.)

On the aspect of the presence of armed US soldiers in Mindanao, he said,

"Meron ding maga sibilyan lalung lalo na sa mga rural areas, katulad naming na talagang galit sa mga Amerikano. Kase nare-remind sila sa mga nangyari na kapag may nakikita silang mga naka armas ng mga Kano. Ok lang kung wala, kasi mabuting kaibigan naman ang mga Moro kapag nakikipag kaibigan ka sa kanila,...Pero kung mayroon kang armas, delikado. Ang isa pa .., pag nakita nilang maganda yung armas mo, ang isa pa duon na pag-iinitan nila yung armas mo na pinakamaganda! Iyun ang ikakamatay mo! [ng mga Kano]. Ngayun, pag may namatay na mga Kano na yan, siempre, ... magrerebelde yang mga Kano. Maghihiganti sila, di ba?". So, ano ang mangyayari?, gulo na naman.. ("There are still people in the civilian populace, particularly in the rural areas who are still mad at the Americans. Because, the figure of a soldier carrying firearms bitterly remind them of the offense and the past massacre in that province. It's ok if they [the Americans] are unarmed. No threat imposed. Since, in truth, Moros are also good friends if you make friends with them. Wearing arms is a sign of danger or offense for the Moros. Another thing, if the Moros see your high quality weapons, they will be interested on that, and that's the reason why they will kill you. Now, if an American dies, they will retaliate, resulting to more conflict and clashes.")

Thus, he expressed more apprehensions than optimism in weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the VFA-Balikatan conduct in the country. He stressed that the presence of the American troops in the Southern portion of Mindanao will most likely invite more trouble since the Moros are very much interested in the weaponry of the American soldiers. In this situation, terrorism will not only be the cause of conflict but also arm snatching, kidnapping, and collateral assaults thereby adding more conflicts in the area.

A critical reflection on this note was expressed by an Army officer in an interview made at Fort Bonifacio, Makati City regarding the planned location of Balikatan Exercise 2003 – 1 series in Basilan, hoping to counteract terrorism and insurgency problem in the province. Major Franco Nemesio Gacal held that, “the AFP can quell terrorist criminals by its military capability alone. However, solving criminality, terrorism and insurgency problems in the province need some careful amendments of the law and changes of local governance. The real problem lies on the rampant proliferation of loose firearms and lack of governmental development and representations in the province to administer, manage and help the people. The off-touch and remote governance in the region breeds mistrust and non-confidence of the people to the government resulting to widespread crimes and undesirable elements of the society.⁸⁷

On the cosmopolitan side, Henry T. Lo, a Chinese businessman, said “it’s a rare privilege to be trained with the world’s best armed forces, not to mention an access and acquisition of some of its modern and highly sophisticated military equipment from the Americans through donations. VFA-Balikatan exercises also help the local residents on some socio-economic and civilian projects like the constructions of roads, ports, and health clinics. The renewed security relations through VFA, also boosts the economic activity in the country in the fields of tourism, commerce and trade if the security and peace and order situation is under control.⁸⁸

SUMMARY

US-Philippine security and defense alliance dates back to the formal agreements signed between the two countries during the Cold War era, namely: the Military Assistance Pact of 1946; the Military Bases Agreement of 1947; the Military Assistance Pact of 1947; the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951; and the Memorandum of Agreement of 1953. These agreements formalized “special relations” between the two countries on issues pertaining to national and regional security and defense.

Under the various assistance programs, organizations, and mechanisms, the US extended the Philippines invaluable assistance. Foremost of such assistance were military vehicles, equipments, weaponry, ammunitions, logistical support and expert advice. These

helped the government crush the old communist movement in the 1950s as well as weaken the current communist movement. The US also helped the government dissipate the Muslim secessionist movements in Mindanao. The Philippines, by hosting the US bases, served as the US forward defense in East Asia to contain communism in the region.⁸⁹

In the post Cold War era, however, the Philippine Senate rejected the US request for new basing arrangements. This led to the withdrawal of US forces from the country. While the act did not abrogate the other military agreements, the withdrawal created a power vacuum, opening up East Asia to the ambitions of other countries. To fill-up the power void, the US negotiated for the VFA, which the Philippine Senate approved in 1991. The VFA provided substance to the MDT of 1951, which did not provide for the presence of US crafts, soldiers, and military personnel. The VFA, thus, became the legal instrument for the reassertion of US presence in East Asia to ensure peace and security in the region.

With the end of the Cold War, the US emerged as the only global superpower with the largest and strongest military establishment in the world. But with the “red menace” behind, there appeared a new threat to the peace and security of the world – terrorism.⁹⁰ Of the terrorists that threaten humanity, Islamic individuals and groups pose the greatest danger to global peace and security. The Al-Qaeda, a loose network of “extremis religious”⁹¹ terrorist with known capacities for destruction and continue to instill fear. While in the Philippines, the ASG, an ethno-nationalist/separatist⁹² terrorist group, perpetrates international crimes through its kidnap-for-ransom activities, with US citizens as particular targets. While the containment of communism united the Philippines and the US during the Cold War, terrorism unites both countries today for national, regional, and global peace and security.

In the post-Cold War era, the US continues to pursue a comprehensive, multi-component military strategy. It includes, according to Gerlach, the following:⁹³ (1) Strategic Deterrence Initiative Planning - to meet a regional, not a global threat; (2) Forward Presence - the need to continue deploying US troops in key regions of the world; (3) Crisis Response - preparedness to respond to any contingency anywhere in the word; and (4) Reconstitution - the necessity of maintaining US ability to develop a much larger military force should another expansive superpower arise and threaten the world. The US-Philippine military alliance, thus, falls under the second component – Forward Presence.

International cooperation, according to Buzan, requires “mature societies that have internalized understanding that national securities are interdependent, and that excessively self-centered or jingoistic attractions, are ultimately self-defeating.”⁹⁴ Setting aside self-centered

nationalism and self-defeating views of self-defense,⁹⁵ the Philippine government, together with the US, conducted the *Balikatan* in Basilan in 2002.

ANALYSIS

Although VFA Balikatan have considerable technical and constitutional controversies, the signing and approval into law, makes it as part of the national security policy. Despite this dilemma, the return of the Americans however cannot be fully charged as a breach of democratic concept in the Constitution. National interests should always be over and above the individual interests. In this case, self-centered nationalism, that interprets the framework of a “free Philippines” in the concept of isolation from foreign contact or exclusion from US sponsored alliance, and based primarily on pride instead of reality and facts, would put forward a backward and laid-back approach to strong nationhood. The rationale in opting for VFA and Balikatan exercises include the following:

- There was an emergence of non-traditional threat called transnational terrorism. Both the US and RP found terrorism as a common enemy in the identity of the ASG and Al-Qaeda networks.
- Balikatan 2002 exercises have shifted its objective from a merely military training exercise into combating insurgency.
- The shift in the objective of the military exercise under VFA was a logical move to address the common problem of transnational terrorism which has an international character of global menace.
- Balikatan 2002 – 1 exercise was successful in achieving its objectives of training the Filipino soldiers and containing ASG and MILF atrocities and terrorism in Basilan.
- Terrorism was addressed in the soonest and shortest time possible that avoided more catastrophic loss of human lives and destruction of peace and order.
- With the Al-Qaeda network presence in the Philippines and established linkage with the ASG, MILF and MNLF, the country has become a convenient haven for the terrorists.
- The government efforts remain hard-up in totally eliminating its domestic problem of ASG terrorism. Partnership with the US offers a better military and operational capability through its modern equipment and technology skills. This was seen and proven effective in the rescue of hostage victims like the Burnhams of USA.
- Terrorist threats are real. They are stateless, formidable, and armed with high powered armaments and have capabilities of biological and chemical warfare. Modernization of

Philippines military equipment and technology must be undertaken the soonest time possible. VFA offers the most accessible venue.

- ASG are lawless criminals using kidnapping as their main activity to sow terror, to get funds and to achieve their ulterior political agenda. Problems on domestic terrorism and insurgency in the Philippines would be more complicated if this is not contained immediately.
- Philippines, just like the US, is determined to carry the war against terrorists at all cost. Existence of ASG in Southern Mindanao necessitates more government actions in the area.

CONCLUSION

Realistically, given the limited means of the AFP and the meager resources of the country, the *Balikatan* was a rationale policy option for the Philippines. It enabled the AFP to access knowledge on terrorism and also provided an opportunity for the AFP to use the latest military technology from the US government. With \$100,000,000.00 from the US government, the Philippines had additional funds to acquire modern equipments to replace the AFP dilapidated devices.⁹⁶ Most importantly, it enabled the AFP to increase its knowledge and experience on terrorism. Thus, *Balikatan*, which included the diplomatic, economic, military, and informational aspects needed to deal with terrorism, was by far the most applicable and holistic approach against terrorism. It is through this exchange military exercise that the AFP acquired invaluable expert advice and skills in the combat of terrorism from US soldiers and personnel.

In analyzing the rational as to why the Philippines should opt for VFA, the following are the findings of this study.

- VFA is the most accessible and timely option for the Philippines. It provides an alternative venue for military capability improvement of the Philippines in combating transnational terrorism from Islamic fundamentalist groups of the ASG, MILF and the MNLF, which has linkage with the Al-Qaeda; and the communist groups of CPP, NPA and NDF.
- The US utilizes the VFA as a legal instrument in reasserting presence of its troops in East Asia particularly in SEA dubbed as “US Forward Deployment” Policy. The terrorist

threat of Al-Qaeda and ASG rekindled the long-thawed security alliance between the US and RP because of the common threat confronting them.

- The presence of the US troops on the affected areas such as Basilan and Zamboanga, help bring back relative peace and order. On the unaffected areas however, people object on the ground of constitutionality and envy for progress in such training areas.
- VFA Balikatan Exercises strategic aspect is to a certain extent advantageous to the Philippines in deterring China's total aggression. It also helps improve the operational and military capability of the AFP in terms of training, technology and upgrade of limited equipments. On the domestic level however, some repercussions could be noted in terms of constitutionality and question of sovereignty.
- The 21st century bilateral relations of US and the Philippines is anchored on the US 'threat-based defense policy' of the Cold War era.
- Balikatan Exercises is one tool for international cooperation that needs to be viewed with mature understanding rather than self-centered nationalism. The US and the Philippine rely with each other because of the threat of terrorism which is transnational in nature.
- Balikatan joint exercises were useful for the AFP in improving the interoperability of its soldiers to combat terrorism. On the government side, it provides relative economic stability and sense of control on peace and order situation of the country. On the affected areas particularly in Basilan and the Southern Mindanao, the exercises and the mere presence of the US troops drives away terrorist attacks and lawlessness from the enemy of the state.
- On the part of the American, Philippines offers a very strategic post for its forward deployment in the Western Pacific through Balikatan exercises. It is the only country in Asia offering ultimate support to US war on terrorism.
- Undeniably, the US however is taking advantage on the Philippines' low bargaining power to assert a better compensation and cost of its forward deployment in Asia. The treatment only shows how exploited and manipulated the Philippines is in the conduct and formulation of the agreement.
- ,The US need not deploy its forces in the country, to contain the threat of terrorism. US presence will further incite more conflict in the war zone areas and trigger controversies due to past record of atrocities with the Moros. Rather, the US should just equip the Philippines with modern and advance military equipments.

- The US motives in deploying its force in the Philippines under the guise of Balikatan exercises is obviously to reassert her presence to fight the threat of terrorism and because of the Philippines long standing faith and trust to the US government.
- Participation of the American troops in solving Philippines internal problems on areas other than in Southern Mindanao would mean over exposure to US soldiers and more sovereignty violation issues.
- The Balikatan exercise in duration was extended and mission shifted from mere training to counter-insurgency operation. This heightened public resistance and doubts on the US motives and interest to the host country.
- Public acceptance of the Balikatan is strong because the fear factor and threat element to life and property are rarely felt in the unaffected areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The preceding recommendations suggest that the terrorists 9-11 attacks on New York and the Pentagon represented a profound effect to America and the Philippines. Given the borderless threat of terrorism, American concerns about security conform with that of the Philippines in its internal problem of local terrorism, secessionist and insurgency problems.

The gravity of this threat together with the Bush Administration post-911 foreign policy... "that emphasizes on military approach to the campaign against Osama Bin Laden",⁹⁷ tagged as war against terrorism came out as a result. Balikatan exercises under the VFA were the ways anti- terrorism is being implemented now in the Philippines.

The following short-term recommendations are lined up to make the VFA - Balikatan exercises more effective in achieving its objectives..

- The Balikatan exercises as specified in the agreement should only be confined to training exercises. Policies and activities in the conduct of the exercises should not involve combat operation by virtue of US "pre-emptive strike policy". It should not also violate territorial rights of the country and break the trust of the Filipino people.
- Unofficial and wrong pronouncements of US troops participation in combat operations should be avoided to minimize undesirable public controversies, resentment, instabilities and conflicts.

- The Terms of Reference should be transparent and should undergo proper technical consultations and concurrence from both parties.
- In times of crisis , Balikatan exercises could be used as back-up by the Philippine Government.
- The Philippine government should make an open consultation with the local Muslim authorities and local settlers for the conduct of Balikatan exercises. Provision for the basic needs, welfare and relocation of the affected people should also be considered like transportation, resettlement areas, food, clothing and allowance.
- In several critical and hotspot zones like Jolo, Sulu, where anti-American sentiments are strong, the Balikatan exercises are best not held there to avoid more collateral damages and unwanted conflicts with US troops.
- Balikatan exercises should be done in shortest time possible, not exceeding 3 months to avoid shifts in operation and to minimize public unrest.
- The US should offer better compensation to the Philippine government by giving modern military equipments and logistics instead of participating in operational matters involving the apparent solutions to the internal problems of the country.
- The US should respect the sovereignty of the Philippines and in the practice of its own brand of democracy.
- Provisions on the role of the Americans as a back-up support should be clearly defined and limited to avoid overlapping and misuse of terminologies against the sovereignty and national interests of the Philippines as the host country.
- The number of US troops participating in the exercise should be limited to the provision specified in the TOR.
- To demonstrate the US sincerity in helping the Philippines, it should give more scholarships in other aspects aside from military such as education, sports, arts and culture.
- Transparency in terms of public knowledge must not be restricted only to military planners and government strategists in order not to create public apprehensions.
- The exercises should have the consent of the local government authorities in the affected areas to facilitate acceptance and people support.

On the long term solution, the following recommendations are forwarded to effectively deal with the problem of both domestic and transnational terrorism.

- Placing Terrorism in Context. According to David Tucker, current notions of terrorism regard as “war” has justified “a war against terrorism” mindset.⁹⁸ In which case, steps toward terrorism is short-term or tactical, hence, temporary. However, terrorism, according to Hoffman, is an unsolvable problem because each state or region breeds its own ethno-nationalist and religious conditions for terrorism.⁹⁹ The effective strategic response is through a long-term approach that regards it as an international crime punishable under applicable laws.
- Study of Terrorism. Terrorism is ancient and the causes that make it resurface time and again are embedded in ethnicity, social inequity, and other wellsprings of dissent and counter consciousness like religion. Terrorism is a complex and dynamic phenomenon. It is, according to Stephen Sloan, highly adaptive and changing in ideology, target, tactics, and goals.¹⁰⁰ It often outpaces the moves of its enemies. Its historical roots, economic milieu, political underpinnings, and cultural undertones need to be studied toward an effective strategic approach.
- Military Solution and Creativity. Hoffman believes that terrorism is not solving through military solutions alone. Since terrorism is dynamic and innovative, the response should be similarly creative, innovative and dynamic – one that is as dynamic and innovative as the terrorists.¹⁰¹ For instance, there is a need to counter the popular alienation and polarization that fuels terrorism. There is a need to bore into the leadership of the organization and then dismantle it with the use of money and personal inducements.
- Effective Intelligence Collection and Analysis. For James Smith and William Thomas, effective response requires effective intelligence collection and analysis, without which our understanding of terrorism would be narrow, ill-advised, thus, erroneous.¹⁰²
- Civilian First Response. Smith and Thomas also recommend the organization of civilians for first response in the event of a terrorist attack. This, however, requires threshing out problems relating to overlapping authority and unclear chains of command.
- International Cooperation. With increasing borderlessness and with communication technology at the disposal of terrorists, terrorism has become an international/transnational crime. Given the limits of states such as the Philippines, a more effective response to terrorism calls for international cooperation, through diplomatic, informational, economic and military actions.

WORD COUNT = 13,567

ENDNOTES

¹ Oxford International Encyclopedia, 4 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), see vol. 4: *World History from 1800 to the Present*, p. 385.

² Joshua Goldstein, *International Relations* (New York: Harper and Collins, 1994), p.38; see also, "The Tokyo Declaration," in *National Security in Southeast Asia*, International Security Council, Tokyo, 13-15 1986.

³ For a more detailed discussion of Dulles ideas, see Robert Hupe, et al., *Protracted Conflict* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 116.

⁴ Max Millikan, "The United States and the Low Income Countries," in *Agenda for the Nation* (Garden City: Double Day and Company), p. 518. Such relations, however, included economic and social programs aimed at the development of recipient countries.

⁵ Milton Walter Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippines* (Hawaii, University of Hawaii, 1965), p. 42.

⁶ George E. Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States: The Problems of Partnership* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), p. 111.

⁷ For the details of the agreement, see "Memorandum of Agreement Between the AFP Chief of Staff and JUSMAG, 09 April 1963."

⁸ See for example, Office of the Foreign Affairs Assistance (OJ7), General Headquarters, AFP, *Brief on US Military Assistance to the RP*, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Mandaluyong, Philippines.

⁹ There are many sources of this. For a more comprehensive view of the matter, see Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippines*, pp. 45-46.

¹⁰ On the strategic importance of the Philippines to the US's defense policy in the region, see Laurence W. Gavin, "A Comparative Study and Analysis of the United States and Soviet Military Assistance to Southeast Asia," Ninth Regular Command and General Staff Course, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Command and General Staff College, Fort Bonifacio, Rizal, Philippines, 1977, p. 14.

¹¹ For the full quote, see Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippines*, p. 46. This agreement sanctioned the sending of a Philippine contingent to the Korean War.

¹² On the threat that the Chinese communists posed and the Korean War, see John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars; CIA and the Pentagon Covert Operations Since World War II* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1986), pp. 61-69, 72-89, 114, 146, 220.

¹³ Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States: Problems of Partnership*, p.44. Impliedly, US assistance to the Philippines was not automatic; rather, it would require the concurrence of the US Congress. This was an irritant in subsequent negotiations.

¹⁴ Edward Lansdale, *In the Misdates of Wars: America's Mission in Southeast Asia* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); see also, Anthony James Jones, *Modern Guerilla Insurgency* (West Point: Connecticut: Praeger, 1992), pp. 64-75.

¹⁵ Marcelo S. Nuguid, "Emergency Purchase in the Armed Forces of the Philippines," Special Study, AFP Command and General Staff Course, Fort Bonifacio, Rizal, Philippines, 1970, p. 14.

¹⁶ William Brannigin, "U.S. Military End's Role in the Philippines," in <http://www.washington>.

¹⁷ Major Darwin Z. Guerra, "Area Coordination Center: A Holistic Approach to Counter-Insurgency," in *Tala* 8/1 First Quarter (January-March 2000): 40-41.

¹⁸ Major Darwin Z. Guerra, "The Area Coordination Center: A holistic Approach to Counter-Insurgency," in *Tala* 8/1 (January-March 2000): 40-41.

¹⁹ "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the United States Regarding the Treatment of Unites Armed Forces Visiting the Philippines," in *A Primer on the Visiting Forces Agreement*.

²⁰ On the *resurfacing* conflicts that implicate the issues of nationality and ethnicity, see Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Simon and Schuster: 1996).

²¹ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd edition (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 141.

²² For a *lengthy* discussion on this, see "Chapter Global Military Situation," in *White Paper* 1996, in http://www.mnd.go.kr/mnden/sub_menu/w_book/1996/211.htm1.

²³ On the *resurfacing* conflicts that implicate the issues of nationality and ethnicity, see Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Simon and Schuster: 1996).

²⁴ "Weekly Significant CTM and SPSG Activities (21-27 January 2003)," Intelligence Division, Philippine Army.

²⁵ The reef is more than 1,000 kilometers from China's nearest coast and only 300 kilometers from the Philippine island of Palawan. China's military construction shows how much balance of power has tipped in its favor against the Philippines. Former Philippines' Secretary of National Defense Orlando Mercado said, . "It will be the farthest projection of China's power, and a dagger at our underbelly". See Politics & Policy: *'Tis the Season.*" Far Eastern Economic Review, December 24, 1998, p. 18-19. For more of Spratly's issues and concerns, see Chen Jie, "China's Spratly Policy: With Special Preference to Philippines and Malaysia." Asian Survey, Vol. XXXIV, No. 10, October 1994, pp 893-903; see also Gerardo Martin C. Valero. Spratly Archipelago: Is the Question of Sovereignty Still Relevant? A Roundtable Discussion, (Quezon City, Philippines: Institute of International Legal Studies, 1993); Romero E. Segundo., "Another Look at the Philippines' One-China Policy", in Churchill and Cariño eds., Perspectives on Philippine Policy Towards China (Quezon City: Philippine Association for Chinese Studies, 1993); and Philippines Law of the Seas, "Potential Areas of Conflict or Cooperation", Chapter 5. (Quezon City: Foreign Service Institute, ____).

²⁶ Karl W. Eikenberry, "China's Challenge to Asia-Pacific Regional Stability," in *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, edited by Richard J. Ellings and Sheldon W. Simon (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), p. 110.

²⁷ William Turley, "Vietnamese Security in Domestic and Regional Focus: The Political-Economic Nexus," in *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, p. 188.

²⁸ Eikenberry, "China's Challenge to Asia-Pacific Regional Stability," in *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, p. 107.

²⁹ Cited in, Sheldon W. Simon, "The Parallel Track of Asian Multilateralism," in *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, p. 24.

³⁰ For the quote, see *The South China Morning Post*, 25 July 1995; and *Xinhua*, 30 July 1995, in *FBIS, Daily Report: East Asia*, 31 July 1995, p. 7, cited in Simon "The Parallel Track of Asian Multilateralism," in *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, p. 24.

³¹ Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Peace Studies in the Post Cold War Era*, p. 42.

³² "Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the United States Regarding the treatment of United States Armed Forces Visiting the Philippines," in A Primer on the Visiting Forces Agreement.

³³ On the critique of the VFA, especially on issues pertaining to territorial integrity and sovereignty, see Roland G. Simbulan, "Policy in Asia and the State of Philippine –U.S. Security Relations," in <http://www.boondocksnet.com/centennial/sctexts/rgs020829.htm1>; see also, "Protest the U.S.-Philippine Visiting Forces Agreement: A Appeal from the friends of the Filipino People," in *Critical Asian Studies*, in <http://csf.colorado.edu/bcas/campaign/bvfacov.htm1>.

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³⁶ Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, p. 141.

³⁷ Gerlach, "Pentagon Myths and Global Realities: The 1993 Military Budget," in *Policy Analysis*.

³⁸ John M. Gates, The College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio, "The U.S. Army and Irregular Warfare," in [http://_____]

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⁴¹ Peter L. Berger, *Holy War Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (New York: the Free Press, 2001).

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⁴⁵ Smith and Thomas, "The Terrorist Threat in Strategic Context."

⁴⁶ Hoffman, "Foreword: Twenty-First Terrorism."

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Tyler Marshall and John Hendren, "U.S. to leave Philippines even with militants at large, local politics limited training of Filipino force," in *Los Angeles Times*, 29 May 2002.

⁴⁹ Smith and Thomas, "The Terrorist Threat in Strategic Context."

⁵⁰ Among the American captives from Dos Palmas were the husband and wife Martin and Marcia Burnham, see Tyler Marshall John Hendren, "U.S. to leave Philippines even with militants at large, local politics limited training of Filipino force," in *Los Angeles Times*, 29 March 2002.

⁵¹ On the borderlessness of terrorism, which partly draws from a trait of the postmodern world, see "The New Liberalism," in <http://www.observer.co.uk/worldview/story/0,11581,680095,00.htm1>.

⁵² Brian Doherty, "Knitting Afghanistan," 27 December 2002, in *reason online*, <http://www.reason.com/links/links122702/shhtm1>. See also Manny Mogato, "America's Agenda: Mindanao is the Backdoor to SEA," in *Newsbreak*, 2/5 13 February 2002, pp. 7-8.

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⁶⁵ Tyler Marshall and John Hendren, "U.S. to Leave Philippines even with militants at large, local politics limited training of Filipino force,"in *Los Angeles Times*, 29 May 2002.

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⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Roland G. Simbulan, "U.S. Policy in Asia and the State of Philippine-U.S. Security Relations."

⁷⁰ Rommel A. Gomez, Philippine Army Colonel, Philippines' Chief of Staff for RP-US Balikatan Team and Chief, Local Training Division of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Training, J8, General Headquarters, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, interview at Fort Bonifacio, Makati, March 07, 2003.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Marshall and Thomas, "U.S. to leave Philippines with militants at large, local politics limited training of Filipino force," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 May 2002. The VFA paved way for the Philippine government to acquire modern equipment like the night tracking device that helped the Filipino government forces to conduct military operations and surveillance particularly on the rescue of the Burnhams.

⁷⁴ Cited in *the newspaper* in "Charter may allow US combat troops", in *The Philippine Star*, Vol XVII No.212, February 25, 2003, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁵ Basilan is another Abu Sayyaf stronghold the in Mindanao that is not far from Sulu – the war torn province in Mindanao. *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Francis B. Harrison, 1922, Cornerstone of Philippine Independence (New York: The Century Co.) p.36.

⁷⁹ Peter G. Gowing. 1977, Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos, 1899-1920. (Quezon City: Philippine Center for Advanced Studies).

⁸⁰ Peter G. Gowing. 1979, Muslim Filipinos – Heritage and Horizon (Quezon City: New Day Publishers) p.34.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* p. 35.

⁸² ARWD (1906), III, p. 279; Telegram from Wood to Andrews, Adjutant General, Manila, March 9, 1906 – a copy is inserted in General wood's diary, in wood Papers. See also, Hagedorn, Hermann. Leonard Wood: A Bibliography. 2 Volumes. (New York: Harper & Bros., 1931), Vol 2, pp. 64-65; and Senate Documents 276 and 289, 59th Congress, 1st session (both printed in Washington: 1906).

⁸³ A telecast translation of a Muslim song featured in Channel 7, 27 February, 2003.

⁸⁴ Op. Cit.

⁸⁵ Singh Abubakar, during an interview on his personal opinion on 'whether he is in favor or not to the presence of the US troops in the Philippines through the VFA Balikatan exercises, at Ibil Residence Hall, UP Diliman, Quezon City, February 27, 2003.

⁸⁶ Zaldy Asammudin, during an interview on his personal opinion on 'whether he is in favor or not to the presence of the US troops in the Philippines through the VFA Balikatan exercises, at Ibil Residence Hall, UP Diliman, Quezon City, February 27, 2003.

⁸⁷ An interviewwith Philippine Army Major Franco Nemesio Gacal, Assistant Chief of Staff for Comptrollership, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal, March 05, 2003.

⁸⁸ Henry T. Lo, a young local businessman based in Cotabato city and Quezon City, in an interview on the implications of the VFA Balikatan in the country, at Makati City, January 28, 2003.

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⁹² Ethno-nationalist/separatist groups "combine a political objective with ethnic and often religious components, but the political side reigns supreme," in "Twenty-First Century Terrorism," <http://usa.af.mil/inss/terrchp1.htm>.

⁹³ Gerlach, "Pentagon Myths and Global Realities: The 1993 Military Budget," in *Policy Analysis.*"

⁹⁴ Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, p. 361.

⁹⁵ Salonga, "The Perils of American Intervention," in *Philippine Graphic*, 11 February 2002. p2.

⁹⁶ Marshall and Hendren, "U.S. to leave Philippines even with militants at large, local politics limited Training of Filipino Force," in *Los Angeles Times*, 29 May 2002.

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⁹⁸ David Tucker, "Combating International Terrorism,"
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⁹⁹ Hoffman, "Foreword: Twenty-First Terrorism."

¹⁰⁰ Stephen Sloan, "The Changing Nature of Terrorism," in <http://www.usafa.af.mil/inss/terrchp3.htm>.

¹⁰¹ Hoffman, "Foreword: Twenty-First Terrorism."

¹⁰² James M. Smith and William C. Thomas, "Terrorism Threat and Response: A Policy Perspective," in <http://www.usafa.af.mil/inss/terrchp1.htm>

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